

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 NEA-14 PM-07 L-03 NSC-07

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15

PRS-01 SP-03 SAJ-01 EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01 /104 W

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P 231415Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1923

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L THESSALONIKI 0255

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, EFIN, GR

SUBJECT: LOCAL REACTION TO WIDENING GOG FRAUD INVESTIGATION

REF: ATHENS 2991

1. "ELLINIKOS VORRAS" OF MAY 23 FRONTPAGES REPORT ON WIDENING GOG INVESTIGATION OF CORRUPTION DURING PAPADOPOULOS ERA. PAPER CARRIES FRONTPAGE MAP OF ABORTED 1968 PLANS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF EGNATIA HIGHWAY BY MACDONALD CONSTRUCTION CO. OF ST. LOUIS AND BANNER HEADLINE, "MACDONALD AGREEMENT BEING INVESTIGATED." ACCORDING TO TEXT, MACDONALD AND POSSIBLY LOCAL OFFICIALS POCKETED \$7.5 MILLION WITHOUT ANY RETURN TO GREECE. PAPER ALSO REPORTS THAT INVESTIGATION CONTINUING ON CONTROVERSIAL 1969 DEAL FOR \$110 MILLION ITALIAN TRACTOR PLANT (THESS 124). ABOVE FOLLOWS CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY ON MEAT SCANDAL IN "VORRAS" OVER PAST WEEK. COMMENT ON THIS SUBJECT IN MAY 22 EDITION CALLED FOR DEATH PENALTY, IF NECESSARY, FOR EX-COMMERCE UNDERSEC BALOPOULOS.

2. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL REPORTERS VISITED OFFICE OF THESSALONIKI MIL CMDR BRIG GEN TASSOPOULOS MAY 23 FOR PRESS CONFERENCE RE SCANDALS WHICH ANNOUNCED IN "ELEFTHEROS COSMOS" SAME DAY. ACCORDING TO RELIABLE USIS SOURCE, ANNOUNCEMENT WAS POSSIBLY DELIBERATE MISUNDERSTANDING, CONFIDENTIAL

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ARISING FROM IMPROMPTU CONVERSATION OF TASSOPOULOS WITH

REPORTERS PREVIOUS DAY. GENERAL HAD REPORTEDLY COMMENTED ON PENDING CASE OF DEMETRIOS PANTZOPOULOS, WHO ALLEGEDLY FORGED TITLES TO LOCAL REAL ESTATE BELONGING TO DECEASED JEWISH FAMILIES. TASSOPOULOS HAD, ACCORDING TO REPORT, VOLUNTEERED FURTHER INFORMATION ON BACKGROUND BASIS, BUT WAS ANGERED BY ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRESS CONFERENCE AND REFUSED TO RECEIVE REPORTERS. LATTER TURNED AWAY BY JUNIOR OFFICER WITH WRITTEN HANDOUT ON PANTZOPOULOS AND NUMBER OF OTHER PENDING CASES INVOLVING CLAIMS TO DISPUTED JEWISH PROPERTIES.

3. COMMENT: LOCAL PRESS DID NOT CARRY "ELEFTHEROS COSMOS" ANNOUNCEMENT, BUT IS EXPECTED TO PUBLISH FURTHER DETAILS ON SCANDALS IN MORNING PAPERS. MISUNDERSTANDING TYPICAL OF TASSOPOULOS' CASUAL MODE OF OPERATIONS, BUT MAY IRRITATE OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS HERE, SINCE HE IN UNLIKELY POSITION TO GIVE PRESS CONFERENCE.
JACKSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, IMPORTS, FRAUDS, MEATS, GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974THESSA00255
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740129-0520
From: THESSALONIKI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740522/aaaaataa.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: ATHENS 2991
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 MAY 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LOCAL REACTION TO WIDENING GOG FRAUD INVESTIGATION
TAGS: PINS, EFIN, GR, (BALOPOULOS, MICHAEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005